

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

ACDA-10 SAM-01 SAB-01 MC-02 /088 W

----- 103754

R 121329Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6625

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 2861

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS, JS

SUBJECT: ARTICLES BY LAHAV ON US MIDDLE EAST POLICY

REF: STAE 108304

1. YEDIOT AHARNONT PUBLISHED SERIES OF 3 ARTICLES (MAY 6, 7, AND 8) BY IT REPORTER YOHANAN LAHAV WHO RECENTLY TOURED THE U.S. LAHAV SERIES DESCRIBES HIS MEETINGS WITH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL, CONGRESSMEN , MEDIA PERSONALITIES, AND MILITARY OFFICIALS. ARTICLES, PUBLISHED MAY 8-9 TO DEPT., FOCUS ON IMAGE OF ISRAEL IN U.S. FOLLOWING BREAKDOWN OF INTERIM SETTLEMENT TALKS. LAHAV'S MAIN IMPRESSIONS ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW.

2. US PUBLIC OPINION. LAHAV FINDS THAT DESPITE " BLATANT SIGNS" OF ANGER SHOWN BY USG AGAINST ISRAEL, AND DESPITE STRONG EXPRESSIONS USED BY THE PRESIDENT AGAINST ISRAEL, THE SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL IN US PUBLIC OPINION HAS NOT WEAKENED, AS IT HAS AMONG POLICY MAKERS, BUT ON THE CONTRARY IT HAS BECOME STRONGER. LAHAV QUOTES LOU HARRIS AS SAYING THAT..." PUBLIC OPINION IS ANTI-ARAB AS IT HAS NEVER BEEN BEFORE, AND PRO-ISRAEL AS IT HAS NEVER BEEN BEFORE..." AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION REFUSES TO ACCEPT ADMINISTRATION VERSION THAT ISRAEL CARRIES MUCH OF THE BLAME FOR SUSPENSION OF TALKS. GREAT MAJORITY OF US PUBLIC IS OPPOSED TO PRESSURING ISRAEL TO RETURN THE TERRITORIES
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TO THE ARABS.

3. CONGRESS. LAHAV CONCLUDES THAT ISRAEL STILL ENJOYS SUPPORT OF MAJORITY IN CONGRESS, BUT ADDS THAT THIS

SUPPORT CAN BE ERODED UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES
UNLESS ISRAEL" TAKES RISKS UPON HERSELF IN ORDER TO
PREVENT THE OUTBREAK OF ANOTHER WAR.."

4. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL. ACCORDING TO LAHAV,
ALL US OFFICIAL DEALING WITH ISRAELI QUESTION AGREE
THAT ISREL TODAY IS NOT PREPARED TO TAKE UPON HERSELF
THE RISKS INVOLVED IN MAKIN EXPERIMENTS ON THE ROAD TO
PEACE. GOI IS TO BLAME FOR FAILURE OF ROUND OF LAST
TALKS, THEY SAY EXPLORING REASONS FOR FAILURE
OF RECENT TALKS, LAHAV CONCLUDES THAT THER ARE BASIC
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ISRAELI AN AMERICAN
POSITIONS. IN PARTICULAR, US POLICY MAKERS DOUBT WHETHER
PEACE CAN BE REACHED WITHOUTAN ISRAELI DECISION TO
RETURN THE TERRIROTIES, ISRAEL WILL HAVE TO RETURN ALL
THE TERRIROTIRS IN RETURN FOR A PEACE AGREEMENT. USG
WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER AN ALTERNATIVE ISRAELI APPROACH
IF AND WHEN SUCH A PLAN SHOULD BE SUBMITTED.

5. PRESS. SEVRAL TOP US REPORTERS TOLD LAHAV
THAT " TERRITORIES TODAY ARE LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE ATMOS
PHERE OF PEACE WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED, IF
KISSNGER'S STEP BY STEP POLICY HAD SUCCEEDED."

6. LAHAV SEES ISRAEL'S FUTURE WITH CERTAN DEGREE OF
OPTIMISM. ONCE REASSESSMENT IS OVER, HE WRITES:" NOT ONLY
WILL THE FLOW OF ARMS BE RESUMED, BUT MOST LIKELY THE
AIRCRAFT, THE MISSILES AND THE BOMBS THAT WERE HELD UP WILL
BE ON THE LIST OF HARDWARE THAT WILL BE APPROVED FOR
ISRAEL." ONE REASON FOR LAHAV'S OPTIMISM IS THA VIETNAM
COLLAPSE WORKS IN FAVOR OF ISRAEL. THIS IS TRUE, HE
BELIEVES, DESPITE STRONG TENDENCY AMONG CONSIDERABLE PART
OF US PUBLIC TO MOVE AWAY FROM FOREING POLICY COMMITMENTS.
LAHAV IS ALSO CONFIDENT THAT MANY OFTHOSE WHO ADVOCATED
US WITHDRAWL FROM VIETNAM AE " HAWKS" WHEN IT COMES TO
MIDDLE EAST. FOLLOWING VIETNAM COLLAPSE(AND EXPECTED
FALL OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA) US WILL HAVE
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TO PROVE ITS DETERMINATION, AND THIS MEANS MAINTAINING
MILITARY FLOW TO ISRAEL. BUT, LAHAV CONCLUDES, ISRAEL
WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PURSUE THE POLICY OF MARKING
TIME."
VELIOTES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PEACE TALKS, POLICIES, PRESS COMMENTS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, PUBLICATIONS PROCUREMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TELAV02861
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750166-0264
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197505100/baaaaero.tel
Line Count: 103
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUL 2003 by SilvaL0>; APPROVED <10 FEB 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 971009
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PFOR, IS, US, (LAHAV, YOHANAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006